

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, 1877, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. Thursday 12 P.M. (Say nothing about this) 1877 Dear Alec:

While the thoughts are fresh and I cannot sleep for thinking I must tell you of them. Willie will take this tomorrow or I will send it. My darling — I feel as if the whole fault of your being worse instead of better is mine and mine alone. If I had only remembered Mamma's words and reminded you of them, you would not use your foot as you do, making it worse. Cousin Mary's words came home to me today, "Everyone knows if a foot is used just when it is getting better it stops healing." and I made you walk all that distance at Aunt Carrie's and I allowed you to walk down the long New York platform without helping you any, and today when I was with you I did not make you use a chair as Mamma did, nor help you any. O Alec I love you and yet if I hated you I could not do more. It is no use your saying anything. I know it needed but a word or look of mine to have made you careful, and I did neither. I have thought and thought until I am weary. I send Willie in, if he will go to see you and to do for you what I should have done and did not and cannot. It is so hard to have you there alone. Won't you see, can't you find out if Mrs. Wilson is ready for boarders and go there at once? I shall not be happy until I know you there. O it is so hard, I have gone all through my life so thoughtlessly leaving everything to others, the thinking and working to others until now when I want to be so thoughtful and careful I cannot be but just go and make things bad before, still worse. I tell you how I feel, I know, now you will do everything however unnecessary it may seem to you that the Doctor tells you to do. Even to getting crutches if necessary. It is hardest of all to think how this would not have been necessary if I had but thought, that now I must ask you to do that from which your whole men's nature revolts. I understand perfectly the feeling perfectly, for I feel it myself quite as keenly as you do. I hate as much as you do to own myself helpless, when you don't like

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to be made to sit down, etc. I understand thoroughly for I would suffer a great deal rather than seen an "invalid". And to think I have brought this upon you — suffering as real in another way as bodily pain. My darling if I could but show you how I regret it, by helping you now, but I cannot. Are you warm enough at night. I am cold now that has set me to wondering if you are. Cousin Mary is lovely she said to tell you if she was well she would have you out here and take care of you. You will be careful now won't you, and if you will get over this soon I shall thank God, he has given me such a lesson as I shall not forget. Please don't try to rid me of this idea, all you can say will not help me, only try with all your might to get well. Make haste slowly. Attempting to do too much before you are strong enough isn't being well.

Goodnight ,I am going to sleep now and I know you will hold my word and wishes sacred.

Your own loving "little girl".